

## Department of State

## § 96.26

(3) Consider any complaints received by the accrediting entity pursuant to subpart J of this part; and

(4) Conduct site visit(s).

(c) The site visit(s) may include, but need not be limited to, interviews with birth parents, adoptive parent(s), prospective adoptive parent(s), and adult adoptee(s) served by the agency or person, interviews with the agency's or person's employees, and interviews with other individuals knowledgeable about the agency's or person's provision of adoption services. It may also include a review of on-site documents. The accrediting entity must, to the extent practicable, advise the agency or person in advance of the type of documents it wishes to review during the site visit. The accrediting entity must require at least one of the evaluators to participate in each site visit. The accrediting entity must determine the number of evaluators that participate in a site visit in light of factors such as:

(1) The agency's or person's size;

(2) The number of adoption cases it handles;

(3) The number of sites the accrediting entity decides to visit; and

(4) The number of individuals working at each site.

(d) Before deciding whether to accredit an agency or approve a person, the accrediting entity may, in its discretion, advise the agency or person of any deficiencies that may hinder or prevent its accreditation or approval and defer a decision to allow the agency or person to correct the deficiencies.

### **§ 96.25 Access to information and documents requested by the accrediting entity.**

(a) The agency or person must give the accrediting entity access to information and documents, including adoption case files and proprietary information, that it requires or requests to evaluate an agency or person for accreditation or approval and to perform its oversight, enforcement, renewal, data collection, and other functions. The agency or person must also cooperate with the accrediting entity by making employees available for interviews upon request.

(b) Accrediting entity review of adoption case files pursuant to paragraph (a) shall be limited to Convention adoption case files, except that, in the case of first-time applicants for accreditation or approval, the accrediting entity may review adoption case files related to non-Convention cases for purposes of assessing the agency's or person's capacity to comply with record-keeping and data-management standards in subpart F of this part. The accrediting entity shall permit the agency or person to redact names and other information that identifies birth parent(s), prospective adoptive parent(s), and adoptee(s) from such non-Convention adoption case files prior to their inspection by the accrediting entity.

(c) If an agency or person fails to provide requested documents or information, or to make employees available as requested, the accrediting entity may deny accreditation or approval or, in the case of an accredited agency, temporarily accredited agency, or approved person, take appropriate adverse action against the agency or person solely on that basis.

### **§ 96.26 Protection of information and documents by the accrediting entity.**

(a) The accrediting entity must protect from unauthorized use and disclosure all documents and information about the agency or person it receives including, but not limited to, documents and proprietary information about the agency's or person's finances, management, and professional practices received in connection with the performance of its accreditation or approval, oversight, enforcement, renewal, data collection, or other functions under its agreement with the Secretary and this part.

(b) The documents and information received may not be disclosed to the public and may be used only for the purpose of performing the accrediting entity's accreditation or approval functions and related tasks under its agreement with Secretary and this part, or to provide information to the Secretary, the Complaint Registry, or an appropriate Federal, State, or local authority, including, but not limited to, a